

## 5 smart ways to Enjoy Lean Beef on a Budget

There is good news about today's beef. Twenty-nine cuts meet government guidelines for lean. That means there are plenty of beef choices to satisfy all tastes, schedules and budgets. You can enjoy the flavors you love. And you don't have to give up nutrition or break your food budget. Here are five easy ways to put some tasty protein on the table.

### 1. Choose less expensive, more flavorful cuts.

Pre-cut meats for kabobs, stew and stir-fry cost more. Save money by choosing steaks or roasts and cutting the meat into cubes or strips. You can also buy boneless roasts to cut into steaks. Your butcher may be willing to do the cutting for you. Look for beef cuts like chuck shoulder, bottom round, petite fillet, tri-tip and ranch steak.

### 2. Match the cooking method to the cut.

Wondering how to cook moist, tender, flavorful beef? The key is to match the cut to the way you cook it. Steak cuts from the chuck, round and flanks are less tender. These are called shoulder, eye round, top round and skirt steak. They need a tenderizing marinade before grilling or broiling. Or you can try a moist heat cooking method, like braising or a slow cooker.

### 3. Stretch your beef dollar with sales.

Sales are a food budget's best friend. So buy extra beef when it is on sale. Freeze it to use later. It's safe to freeze beef in the original packaging or you can rewrap it. For long-term freezing, wrap an extra layer of aluminum foil, freezer paper or freezer-weight plastic bags over the store plastic. This prevents "freezer burn." Use frozen steaks and roasts within 9 to 12 months.



### 4. Plan to cook once and dine twice.

Save money and time by fixing extra beef. Then you'll have ingredients on hand for another delicious dish. Grilling steak tonight? Use extras in a salad tomorrow. Have leftover cooked lean burgers? Crumble them into chili, tacos, pizza or pasta dishes.

### 5. Take a (tri) tip from the experts.

Need some new ideas? Wondering how to cook a tri-tip roast? Or how to grill a new type of steak from the meat case? No worries – help is just a mouse click away. Look for tips on the Web sites of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association and state beef councils. Search for your state site or go to [www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com](http://www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com).